

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

November 10th, 2020

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday November 10th, 2020 at 7:05pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, and associate members Sarah Carrier and Scott Lever. Shirley Canniff was not present for this meeting. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also in attendance.

Anticipated Speakers: Jody Reale

Members of the Public: Kevin Beuttell, Josh Atkinson

Preliminary Matter: Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

Open Forum – Public Comment

N/A

Robbins Farm Slide Discussion – With CPSI Jody Reale of Reale Associates

Certified Playground Safety Inspector, Jody Reale, of Reale Associates was present on the call. Mr. Connelly has been speaking with Ms. Reale regarding the proposed/potential Robbins Farm Slide project. The Robbins Farm slides are very popular in Town and used frequently. Over recent years, parts (sections) of the existing slides have broken and have needed to be replaced. Mr. Connelly began discussions with the Commission at the previous meeting regarding potentially removing (1) of the Robbins Farm Slides in the near future. This comes as replacement parts are no longer available and there are concerns if another part is to break in the next year. If this is to occur, both slides will need to be closed or removed until new slides can be installed. Capital funding has been requested for new slides to be placed at Robbins Farm Park. If approved however, funding would not be made available until July 2021 at the earliest. By removing one of the existing working slides, this would allow (1) slide to remain open. This also would provide the department with replacement parts in the event parts break on the remaining operating slide. Mr. Connelly stated that he is recommending this potential project in order to be proactive rather than reactive. Ms. Reale has a great deal of experience with playground projects across the State and has worked with the Town before. She discussed with Commissioners potential options how to remove one of the slides and potential ways to create a safe & up to code area where the removed slide was placed. Options discussed varied with possible safety surfaces that could be placed being wood chips, rubber surfacing, and/or turf. Other ideas discussed include using synthetic turf, rubber tiles, plantings, granite benches, etc. Commissioners shared a variety of concerns/opinions including potential erosion issues, safety issues, and how they would limit individuals using the area of the existing slide as a new access point to the remaining. Safety guidelines and potential options/solutions were discussed in length. It was determined that a decision from the Commission on if/how the project would occur would not be decided tonight. Mr. Connelly will continue discussions with Ms. Reale on the project and the discussions that occurred with the Commission this evening.

After-school and Preschool Program Review Period

No updates or changes to report regarding this.

Capital Feasibility Study Initial Assessment Review

Kevin Beuttell & Josh Atkinson, representative from the design firm Stantec, were present on the call. Stantec is in the process of completing a Capital Feasibility Study for the department in relation to parks and playgrounds in the Town of Arlington. Mr. Connelly has met at site locations several times already with Mr. Beuttell & Mr. Atkinson. These representatives presented to Commission Members on the firm's initial assessment of the properties visited. The goal of this was to share the initial information and gather feedback from Commission Members before going further into the process. Locations discussed included Spy Pond Park, Field Hurd, Robbins Farm Playground, Menotomy Rocks Park, Poets Corner, McClennen Park, Crosby Tennis Courts, Parmenter Park, Parallel Park, Thorndike Field, & Turkey Hill. It was noted that the information presented were based off initial findings and are not final proposals. Feedback and thoughts by Commission Members in reference to the information presented shared included:

- Importance of natural entryways to parks in Arlington

- *Consistent and visible signage at park locations in Town*
- *Amenities (Trash Barrels, Bike Racks, Benches) – Placement*
- *Concerns regarding parking & traffic near the Brackett School*
- *Concerns regarding the coexistence of bikes & dogs within parks.*
- *Requested if Menotomy Rocks Park Playground, smaller in design and alternative location. If occurs, more integrated in natural landscape.*
- *If Robbins Farm Playground replaced, design should not be associated with a farming theme*
- *Possibility of adding shade structures in Town Parks*
- *Additional entry points to Parallel Park*
- *Robbins Farm Playground and Slide: (2) different projects*

Questions included:

- *Will Stantec be doing proposed plans and cost estimates for locations? (Yes)*
- *Where have soil samples from properties been sent? (Turf & Soil Diagnostics)*
- *Items of scope & public feedback process? (Will occur, more information to come)*

Arlington Reservoir Phase 2 Project Review by Commission

Mr. Connelly reported that Commissioners received the latest design and budget for the Reservoir Phase 2 Project from KZLA. Mr. Connelly and Commission Members discussed this latest information. Mr. Connelly will be reporting back to KZLA with the Commissioners feedback and recommendations.

Correspondence Received: Feedback on Reservoir Project, Crusher Lot

Mr. Connelly spoke on both the Reservoir Project and Crusher Lot, which the department received feedback on. One item to note was that a mountain biking feature on the Crusher Lot Property has been removed. This was built after the July 8th date. On 7/8/20, Members of the Commission determined that no additional features related to mountain biking should be built on the property. Some unauthorized features (trails & ramps) were built previously. The Commission determined for these to stay, but prohibited the building of any additional features. Mr. Connelly stated if a resident notices a new feature, they should contact him directly.

Capital Project Updates

No Update Provided.

Task Group Updates

No Updates Provided.

Recreation and Rink Updates

Updates from the department on the recreation/rink operations included information on the mandatory ice rink shut down issued by the state. Due to rising cases of COVID-19 connected to indoor ice hockey, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued a new public health order today prohibiting indoor ice rinks and ice skating facilities from operating from October 23, 2020 to November 7, 2020. This shutdown will have an impact on the operating budget for the fiscal year. The department is continually working with the Town's Board of Health regarding COVID policies for recreation programs, including those at the rink. Mr. Connelly stated that hockey (*including high school hockey*) is scheduled to happen as of now, but things are changing frequently. It was reported that the Kid Care Remote Learning Center has had a successful first week. This program began/opened last week. Mr. Connelly noted the hard work and efforts of Department staff members Erika Roberts & Kelli Devine. Both are overseeing the Remote Learning Center and have put in a great deal of time in order to make this licensed program happen. Due to the program location, this had to be licensed through EEC separately from the department's regular afterschool program. General recreation programs continue to operate. The department has been continuing to prepare for the start of travel basketball. Currently, there are over (125) individuals registered for this winter's program. Teams of (10) players will be practicing once a week in Town. The current plan is to add (1) out of town game for several week beginning in January. The program and in town travel basketball practices will begin after Thanksgiving.

Approval of Minutes – September 22nd, October 6th, & October 20th, 2020

The approval of Meeting Minutes from the September 22nd, October 6th, and October 20th Park and Recreation Commission Meeting were discussed. The only edited requested for the September 22nd Meeting Minutes is the following:

- *Under the Approval of Minutes Section in the September 22nd Meeting Minutes, the September 8th Meeting is referred to as September 6th. This needs to be changed to the correct date of the 8th.*

It was determined that no edits needed to be made to the October 6th Meeting Minutes. The Commission also determined to table the approval of the October 20th Meeting Minutes to their next meeting.

The motion to approve the September 22nd & October 6th Commission Meeting Minutes, as amended, was made by Mr. Lasker. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. The Commission voted to approve the September 22nd & October 6th Meeting Minutes with a vote of 4-0, at 10:07pm.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings

- Field Report Recommendations and Block Scheduling Discussion

Other

- The next Park & Recreation Commission Meeting will via Zoom call on Tuesday, November 24th at 7:00pm

Mr. Walker motioned to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 4-0, at 10:10pm. The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.